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U.S. DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR
BUREAU OF LAND MANAGEMENT

SOCORRO
FIELD OFFICE

NEW MEXICO
BACK COUNTRY BYWAY

QUEBRADAS

A 24-mile drive along scenic colored cliffs, rock formations, and badlands with glimpses of the Rio Grande and surrounding mountains.



BLM'S NATIONAL BACK COUNTRY BYWAYS

Pioneers crossing the expanse of the Old West experienced early the vast scenic wonders of this country. The Bureau of Land Management's (BLM) National Back Country Byways program offers you an opportunity to rediscover the splendor of the West's public lands. The National Back Country Byways program is the BLM's unique contribution to the larger National Scenic Byways program. Both are the result of a study by the President's Commission on Americans Outdoors that found 43 percent of American adults drive for pleasure. In fact, next to walking, driving for pleasure is America's most popular form of recreation. Back Country Byways usually traverse scenic corridors and offer a wide variety of outdoor experiences.

◆ QUEBRADAS BACK COUNTRY BYWAY

The Quebradas (kay-brah'-das) Back Country Byway traverses approximately 24 miles of rugged land east of Socorro, New Mexico (see map). Two National Wildlife Refuges are only a few miles from this byway, Sevilleta to the north and Bosque del Apache to the south. Most of the land you will cross is public land administered by the Bureau of Land Management (BLM).

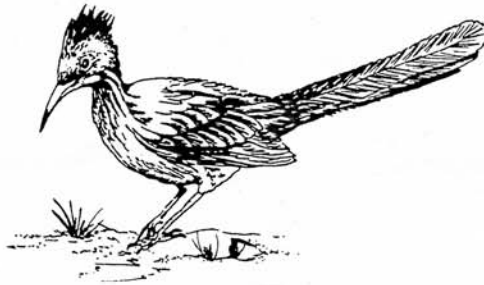
The Quebradas (which means breaks) Road is an annually maintained dirt road. A high-clearance type vehicle, such as a truck or 4-wheel drive is recommended. However, the road can be negotiated in a passenger car, unless the road is wet (clay soils become very slippery) or eroded from rains. The road crosses several small arroyos (drainages) which carry water during intense thunderstorms. The crossings can contain deep pockets of sand. Use is discouraged during or immediately following heavy rain. Vehicle speeds should not exceed 25 mph on straight stretches of road and 10 mps on hills and curves.

◆ ACCESS

The Quebradas Back Country Byway can be accessed from either Interstate 25 or State Highway 380 (see map).

From I-25, take the Escondida exit, head east and then north. Turn right and pass Escondida Lake. Cross the Rio Grande and proceed east through the settlement of Pueblitos. Turn right (south) on the road that follows the east side of the Rio Grande (watch out for sand). After about 6/10ths of a mile, there will be a dirt road that takes off sharply to the left (east). Stay on this road and follow the Back Country Byway signs and markers.

From Highway 380, proceed approximately 11 miles east of San Antonio, New Mexico, then turn left on County Road No. A-129, and travel about 3 miles north. Turn left (west) before the cattle guard and follow the Back Country Byway signs.

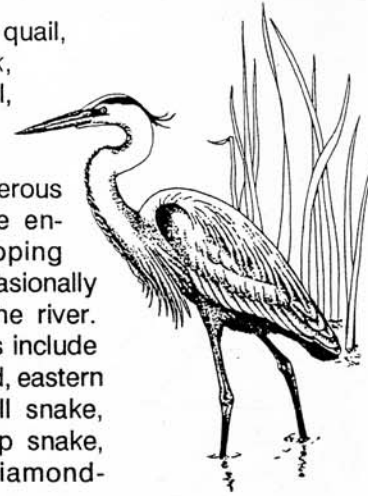


◆ WHAT YOU WILL SEE

The Quebradas Back Country Byway meanders through approximately 24 miles of BLM land including interesting geologic and scenic regions.

When accessing the road from I-25, you immediately cross the scenic Rio Grande. The river and its associated vegetation provide important habitat for a variety of wildlife including mule deer, coyote, bobcat, gray fox, raccoon, porcupine, opossum, ground squirrel, cottontail, and jack rabbit. Typical bird species you may see include the snow goose,

sand-hill crane, quail, red-tailed hawk, American kestrel, roadrunner, horned lark, raven, and numerous songbirds. The endangered whooping crane is also occasionally sighted along the river. Common reptiles include the collared lizard, eastern fence lizard, bull snake, king snake, whip snake, and western diamond-back rattlesnake.



Much of the area along the byway is characterized by rolling bench lands which rise above the Rio Grande floodplain to the west and rugged north-south running ridges of alternating bands of red and yellow sandstone, red and purple shale, and white to gray limestone.

The region includes upper Chihuahuan desert mountain ranges with sparse vegetation. The Quebradas Road crosses several arroyos which drain into the Rio Grande. Erosion has created scenic geological settings such as the Arroyo de la Presilla, Arroyo del Tajo, and the Loma de las Cañas ridgeline (see map). Many areas along the road contain near vertical, multi-colored cliffs, twisted and convoluted badlands, narrow box canyons, and other topographic landforms. Colorful soils and banding of rock formations can be viewed midway through the drive.

A variety of recreation opportunities exist along the route, some of which include back country vehicle touring, rock hounding, photography, hiking, wildlife observation, hunting, and historical/cultural sightseeing. The Arroyo del Tajo, Arroyo de Tio Bartolo, and Arroyo de la Presilla Boxes are areas of outstanding visual quality characterized by various erosional features, including water-sculpted limestone and granite walls. These areas provide excellent back country opportunities.

◆ MULTIPLE-USE MANAGEMENT

A variety of land uses occurs along the byway. The primary uses include recreation, mineral exploration, and livestock grazing. Livestock developments along the road and surrounding area are private property. Please respect these uses and developments while driving the byway. Your cooperation is sincerely appreciated.

The BLM is currently managing some of the area along the byway as Wilderness Study Areas (WSA's). The byway actually separates the Presilla and Sierra de las Cañas WSA about midway through the drive. The BLM is managing these areas to maintain their natural character and primitive recreation opportunities. Congress will ultimately make a final determination as to their wilderness suitability.

PLEASE BE PREPARED

Always check ahead when planning an outing on a Back Country Byway. Carry plenty of water with you and make sure you have enough gasoline to make the entire trip. This Byway has no services and takes about 2 or 3 hours to drive at a leisurely pace. Keep a spare tire, jack, tool kit, a shovel and blankets in your vehicle. Please obey all signs and respect private property. Please be alert, take your time, stay on existing roads, and have a good time when you visit a back country byway.

Full services and medical help are available in Socorro, New Mexico.

